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KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY GAMES

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Until the effort is made one can never know the difficulty of the task of trying to write out children's games. The baldness and bareness of mere words, minus the music, the charming, unconscious action of the children, and the thousand subtleties that add to the rounding-out of a game, tempt one, even after putting his hand to the plow, to turn back. Besides, one never plays a game exactly the same the second time. Different children, different days, different conditions in many ways, combine to make changes to "fit." Hence only an artist could put before a reader an adequate description of many of the games that grow directly out of the work in hand.

The introduction of a new game is an art, a fine art built upon long experience. To make it go, it must take hold of the children's interest in a practical way. The leader must know where to turn for help among the children who have strength in taking the initiative and whose interest will at once become active. Again, the leader must be able at a moment's notice to change her plan or modify it according to the suggestions of the children.

By dramatizing the industrial life around us we are soon able to select the dramatic incidents in a story, and "act them out"—mostly in pantomime, to be sure, but in a way most satisfactory and pleasing to the children.

From time to time I hope to make the attempt to put before the readers of this magazine some of the plays and games as we have played them in our kindergarten, asking always leniency for the manner and style of the bare outlines I am forced to give.

GAME I

CLOUDS AND RAIN

Time: A cloudy, rainy day.

Music: "Plump Little Baby Clouds," from *Primary and Kindergarten*

Songs, Part II, by Eleanor Smith; "Pit-a-Pat," from *Songs of the Child World*, Part I, by Jessie Gaynor.

Watch the clouds to see if the wind is blowing them. Choose one child to show how fast or how slowly the clouds are moving. Ask if they are making any noise as they move, and insist upon very quiet movement. Suggest that the eyes be covered with the arms, so that everything will seem dark as the clouds make it seem. Choose one child at a time, giving all who ask a chance to show, and then "magically" change them all into "plump little baby clouds, dimpled and soft," and play and sing softly as they creep softly around the room. Try this a number of times, until the children get into the spirit of it. Next play "Pit-a-pat," and let them lower their arms and run in time to the music, pattering their feet to represent the pattering of the rain. Play slowly and softly, then more rapidly, and still more rapidly and louder, asking that they follow the lead of the piano. Suddenly the music will stop, indicating that the shower is over, beginning again and stopping at intervals. (An excellent opportunity is thus afforded for alert attention and instantaneous obedience.) If there is a thunderstorm, the arms may be thrown away from the eyes and back again to indicate lightning, and the feet make a noise to represent thunder.

Over and over again this may be played with the deepest interest on the part of the children—just so long as the teacher is herself interested and will insist upon absolute obedience to the piano's dictates.

GAME II

GAME OF THE FIRE FAIRIES

Dramatizing a story: Tell the story of "Ted and the Fire Fairies," *Course of Study*, January, 1901.

Ask the children to watch a fire burn, noticing how it dances and plays around a piece of paper that it devours. Call the flames "the fire-fairies," and ask who could show with his arms the way they dance. Gradually the children will develop a movement with their arms, darting them up and down slowly and rapidly, as the music will suggest. (The "Fire Music" from *Siegfried* is the best, but any staccato music may be used

by adapting the tempo to the darting movement of the flames. Beginning with a slight movement of the arms upward, with the hand held straight, and increasing in rapidity, the children may rise gradually to their feet, and with arms still darting upward may very realistically represent the "fire-fairies," as they softly dance up and down on their toes. As the "fuel" gives out, the children may gradually sink to the floor, and finally drop entirely down, pushing out a tiny flame occasionally, as one sees in a dying fire. Several children may group themselves on the floor to represent a heap of coals. One child may clap his hands to represent the striking of a match, and a fire will thus be started. Another child may play that he is a log of wood, and be started in the same way. The fairy-ring may also be started as told of in the story.

A fireplace may be made of several chairs, and someone may play grandmother sitting near the fireplace knitting. (A child in the fireplace represents the fire.) Ted comes in at the door shivering as he plays that he takes off his wraps and lies down in front of the fire to get warm. He asks his grandmother what becomes of the flames as they go up the chimney, and she replies that she thinks they go back to the palace of the fire-king. Ted goes off to sleep, the fairy jumps out of the fire, takes him by the hand, and leads him through the land of the fire-fairies, showing him the fairy-ring, red-hot stove, log of wood, etc. He then takes him to the palace of the fire-king; and the play thus progresses as the story winds along, until Ted is brought back by the fairy and is wakened by the dinner bell and his grandmother's voice.

Naturally this subject must be handled most carefully. The story and play emphasize constantly that little children must let fire alone. Ted was sent for because he played with the fire. It may be made a very helpful or a most harmful thing, and is given to show that a doubtful subject may be handled in such a way as to benefit rather than harm little children. Most children are brought in contact with fire every day, and learning how to let it alone seems to me to be a very important lesson.